Cultural Minefields: Cultural Heritage Training in the U.S. Military

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Cultural competence is a vital component of many missions in today's military. Cultural competence enables one to further a mission, save resources, and save lives. Conversely, a lack of cultural competence may bring about challenges to mission completion, requirement for more resources, waste of resources, and destruction of lives. Cultural competence involves many components. One particular component is cultural heritage and protection of cultural property.

Cultural property is comprised of the physical, social, and psychological components that define one's culture. This may be a representation of a deity, a sacred space, a social practice such as going to the market, or a belief such as a local legend (Rush, 2012). Cultural heritage lays the foundation "for vibrant, innovative and prosperous knowledge societies" (UNESCO, 2008). The cultures to which these items belong are the owners; disregarding this fact may lead to severed connections, poor communication, retaliation, poor public relations, and even violence (Matsuda, 1998).

There are many news headlines featuring militaries behaving poorly toward others' cultures; unintentional or intentional, actions that disregard cultural heritage may be harmful. In 2009, for example, U.S. forces expanded their camp in Afghanistan without taking the local culture and landscape into account (Phillips, 2009). As a result, ancient but still utilized water systems were blocked off or contaminated, upsetting the local villagers. The U.S. then had to pay reparations and was not able to work with the locals as intended. The impact of cultural heritage mistakes is significant and harmful; however, there are also examples of military respect for cultural heritage. The recent coordination of the no-strike list between coalition forces enabled the U.S. and the U.K. to demonstrate respect for the cultural heritage of Italians and Libyans, for example (C. Wegener, personal communication, October 17, 2013). Heritage preservation is a

force multiplier and offers the opportunity to aid in rebuilding relations among countries. It is a

way to show respect to coalition forces and generate valuable opportunities to partner in positive

ways. It also contributes to unified operations, and it may save lives and dollars. Both the

positive and negative illustrations point to the importance of cultural heritage education and

training in the military.

What is the current state of understanding and training for military members with regard

to cultural heritage? Literature reviews reveal few actual studies. The extent of cultural heritage

knowledge is little known, and it may be an untapped resource for allied forces. A series of

studies was conducted to assess current understanding of cultural property protection within the

U.S. military and to determine the effectiveness of a training aimed at increasing cultural

property protection awareness, knowledge, and comfort within the military setting. It was

hypothesized that participants would vary in their level of awareness, knowledge, and comfort

with cultural property protection, and that all would show a significant improvement in

knowledge scores post-training. Factors such as deployment experience would be examined for

potential correlation with measures such as awareness.

Method

A 14-question pre-read survey was developed to assess participants' demographics,

awareness, knowledge, and efficacy with regard to cultural property protection (CPP).

Demographics included questions on CPP training and cultural property destruction. Awareness

included values, laws, and procedures, while knowledge examined know-how, such as how to

beddown in a protected structure or communicate information about the structure. Efficacy

assessed one's comfort with engaging in the knowledge-based tasks. After participants

completed the pre-survey, they were either asked to read one of two hard copy manuals on CPP

that they were given or they were given instruction in equal opportunity (EO) subjects.

The CPP manuals were developed by the Combatant Command (COCOM) Cultural Heritage Action Group. Both manuals connected concepts of cultural property protection with well-established military operations concepts. One manual, "The Cultural Minefield: A Manual on Cultural Property Protection for the Operator Forward" (Rush, 2012) was 76 pages and took approximately 2 hours to complete. The other manual, "A manual for cultural property protection in the deployed environment" (Rush, 2012) was 12 pages and took no more than 45 minutes to complete. After reading the manual (or receiving general EO knowledge), participants completed a post-read survey.

A 24-question post-read survey was administered to assess awareness, knowledge, and comfort, in addition to feedback on the manual itself. The surveys utilized a 1–5 rating scale with 1 representing no awareness, knowledge, or comfort and 5 representing absolute awareness, knowledge, and comfort with different aspects of cultural property protection. Participants were solicited primarily in person. Participants were informed that it was a volunteer opportunity and that, should they decide to participate, they would fill out a pre-read survey, read the manual (or not), and complete a post-read survey.

Participants were divided into "Study One" and "Study Two" to reflect that they were recruited from different sources and received different manuals. Paired t-tests were conducted within each study using Microsoft Excel database software.

In a separate study on the topic of hazing, participants were given scenarios of initiation, celebration, and bullying behaviors and were asked to judge what the behavior was for each scenario. Seven questions specifically examined judgment toward damage of cultural property.

Results were examined from the standpoint of descriptive statistics. These questions were pulled from this study and are included for consideration and referred to as "Study Three."

Study One Results

Study one utilized the full-length manual and participants primarily from DEOMI's Leadership Team Awareness Seminar (LTAS). A total of 30 participants engaged in the study. All participants received the pre-test and post-test; 18 participants received the manual, while 12 did not receive the manual for control. Participant demographics are illustrated in Figure 1. Average pre-read scores indicated that participants had limited awareness for all measures regarding CPP (Figure 2). Participants averaged a statistically significant (P-value 0.0 level) 2-point increase in all measures on the post-test, indicating they were more aware, knowledgeable, and comfortable with CPP after reading the manual. Participants in the control group showed limited awareness for all measures regarding CPP (Figure 3) but did not show the increase in rating scores with post-assessment (P-values ranged from .24 to .49), supporting the idea that the change in ratings was facilitated by the manual.

All participants marked that the manual would be helpful for deployments and that if they were given the manual, they would read it. Participants rated the manual as extremely useful on average and found the formatting just right with elements (such as pictures or lists) in place.

Study Two Results

Study Two utilized the shorter manual and participants from the Equal Opportunity Advisor Course (EOAC). A total of 79 participants engaged in the study. In the test group, 27 participants received the pre-test and post-test and the manual, while 52 participants served as control, engaging in pre-assessment surveys. Participant demographics are illustrated in Figure 1.

Average pre-read scores indicated that test-group participants had limited awareness for all measures regarding CPP (Figure 5). Participants averaged a statistically significant (P-value 0.0 level) 2-point increase in all but two measures, which had a significant 1-point increase on the post-test, indicating they were more aware, knowledgeable, and comfortable with CPP after reading the manual. The two factors that had only one-point significant increases in ratings were awareness of the connection between cultural heritage and EO and comfort in execution of CPP.

Participants in the control group showed limited awareness for all measures regarding CPP (Figure 6) but did not show the statistically significant increase in scores with post-assessment (P-values ranged from .24 to .49), supporting the idea that the change in scores of the test group was facilitated by the manual.

The majority of participants marked that the manual would be helpful for deployments and that if they were given the manual, they would read it. Participants rated the manual as useful on average and found the formatting just right with elements (such as pictures or lists) in place.

Study Three Results

A total of 106 participants (the same participants who engaged in Study Two) engaged in a separate study that examined hazing. Total average ratings revealed that the majority of participants (50%) were not sure how to view the destruction of others' cultural property, 45% viewed the scenarios as hazing or bullying, and 5% of participants viewed destroying others' cultural property as "just having fun."

Discussion

Participant demographics were not equal in category representation, with both studies having a majority of Army, male, human resources (HR), deployed, and persons from the senior

enlisted ranks who had not received cultural heritage training nor witnessed cultural heritage destruction. While comparisons could be made on the bases of job, service, gender, etc., they would be limited due to the unequal sample size. Additionally, no Clandestine Services were surveyed. Future efforts may benefit from obtaining their input, particularly Clandestine Services who are frequently in forward deployed environments.

Pre-test read, the majority of participants for both studies had limited awareness of cultural heritage laws and minimization of damage. These findings are interesting in that a significant number of military members deploy to foreign areas where the awareness of cultural heritage can save lives and dollars. Additionally, a sizable number of participants remarked that this was novel and important information. The value of cultural heritage stood out from laws and damage minimization as participants had the highest ratings of this measure pre- and post-test for both groups. It follows that the value of one's own cultural heritage may be more easily grasped; however, it is possible that the relevance to the military may need further strengthening for some participants.

Examination of knowledge scores pre-test read shows that variations exist within cultural knowledge domains, highlighting certain domains as being less known among the participants tested. The majority of participants in both groups did not know how to recover or how to beddown with cultural property, for example. Post-test read, these scores had significantly improved but still remained the lowest scores. This finding is important in that cultural property is purposely utilized by enemy forces and can be a source of protection from enemy fire. It follows that knowledge about bedding down with cultural property would be one of the first domains in which to target training. It is also likely that more interactive training is required for these domains as opposed to the written format utilized in the manual. On average, however,

participants' knowledge for both groups significantly increased for all knowledge measures after

reading the manual.

It is worth noting that the groups did not start out with the same scores on average, with

the senior leaders having higher pre-read averages than the non-senior leaders, which would be

expected. The cause of this difference could be due to seniority and confidence or experience.

While it is not certain which factor contributed more, deployment levels were higher in the

second group, reducing the likelihood that deployment experience led to greater knowledge

between the two groups. This factor was isolated and examined. The pre-manual ratings of those

who had deployed for Study One and Study Two were compared via independent t-tests

revealing Study 1 participants having greater average ratings for all factors (Figure 7).

Differences were statistically insignificant (P-values ranged from .12 to .86) between all but two

factors, awareness of the value of CPP and comfort with communication with CPP, which were

statistically significant (P-value .04 and .03, respectively). The difference in ratings appears to be

more likely due to differences in the seniority of the first group rather than deployment status.

While the number of participants within each rank was too small for a proper statistical test, a

visual comparison between deployed groups broken down by rank revealed that those with more

seniority tended to have higher ratings across the board in both studies.

Many studies in other fields, such as HIV prevention, have shown that knowledge does

not equal efficacy or a sense of comfort or belief that one is capable of changing behavior despite

knowledge that behavior should be changed (Svec, 2003). Comfort with cultural heritage was

assessed to gauge whether participants had the confidence to engage in cultural property

protection behaviors after learning how to do so. The majority of participants were not

comfortable with performance pre-test read; however, a sizable number of participants were

comfortable despite not being fully informed. Comfort with communication was higher, while comfort with execution was lower. It is encouraging that knowledge increased efficacy and interesting that participants could be confident in skills they did not have. This finding highlights the need for objective data that assess cultural competence and heritage preservation skills as well as subjective data. People who are confident but inaccurate may do more damage than those who are not confident with regard to cultural heritage preservation (or any skill).

One consideration when examining the data is that deployment status had an influence on levels of CPP awareness, knowledge, and comfort pre-training. To examine whether this was the case, participants' data were separated into either having been deployed or never deployed and compared. As would be expected, those who had deployed rated all measures higher (greater awareness, knowledge, and comfort) than those who had not deployed, pre-test read, for all measures for both studies (Figures 8 and 9). The difference was not significant for Study 1 (Study 1 P-values ranged from .19 to .80), while Study 2 showed statistical significance in all of the knowledge factors (by 1 rating on average) but none of the awareness or comfort factors (P-values were .03, .04, .02, .01, .00, .01, and .00 for knowledge factors of identifying, avoiding damage, minimizing damage, recovering, maximizing, bedding down with, and communicating CPP, respectively. Non significant P- values ranged from .15 to .48 for the other factors. While deployment does increase all CPP self ratings, it is likely that deployment in itself is not sufficient to provide all the necessary skills one needs to be culturally competent. Factors such as awareness and comfort may be less subject to experience, while knowledge and skills are aided by the experience of deployment. It would be interesting to test the pre-training ratings of those who have not deployed but have gone through realistic training, such as found at Fort Drum, NY.

It follows that higher ratings could make for higher proficiency before one is tested by the reality of combat situations; however, this remains to be tested objectively.

The scenario assessment data was illustrative in that a large percentage of participants were unsure how to view cultural heritage situations and that there are participants who would purposely destroy others' heritage for fun. Future studies would benefit from including these types of questions in the pre-post assessment to determine whether education would shift participants' scenario judgments. It is possible that training would not modify such beliefs; however, several comments reflected a belief that destroying other's culture was fun and/or necessary for survival. While these beliefs appear to be present, are concerning, and must not be ignored, it is encouraging that they are reflected in a minority of participants.

Assessment of the manuals themselves revealed that participants found them usable. The lowest rating, that for pictures, was likely due to image quality as participants remarked that they were hard to decipher. The manual was printed in black and white; therefore, it is important to ensure color printing of the photographs for maximum effectiveness before the manual is distributed. The manual content was well received. However, the length of the manual was rated as a little too long, which was expressed in the comments. One of the purposes of the manual is use in the field; therefore, a short and direct version via app, e-reader, or pocket device may be worth pursuing in conjunction with publication of this manual for further reference.

Suggestions included checklists at the end of each section, increasing and clarifying the "so what" factor, and electronic or PowerPoint formats. Service members may appreciate a version that could be viewed on their e-readers. A frequent comment included the importance of cultural heritage knowledge, the novelty of this knowledge to the participants, and the need for more segments of the military to have this knowledge.

It is worthwhile to pursue versions that may be aimed at different segments of the population, from the senior leader to the newly enlisted, as well as service specific cultural property knowledge. What an Air Force pilot encounters may be vastly different from what a Navy diver encounters; however, they are both important. Cultural heritage is a legal matter as well as a human rights, EO, and cultural competence matter. The more often troops are socialized to these concepts, the less often there should be international incidents of cultural heritage actions gone wrong.

Summary

Cultural property and its protection are matters of law, heritage, human rights, and strategy. Few formal studies have been conducted with regard to CPP and the military; training CPP as well as understanding the current state of it in the military remains a crucial area for understanding. Such information can be utilized to guide policy, training, and future directions. This study sought to assess the current state of cultural heritage awareness, knowledge, and comfort as well as the effectiveness and areas for improvement of the cultural heritage training manual.

The results of this study indicate that the current state of cultural heritage awareness and knowledge among service members has room for improvement. Participants somewhat know the value of cultural heritage and are less than somewhat aware of laws or protection. This finding is important because service members will still be held accountable to the law, even if they do not know it. With regard to cultural heritage knowledge, participants are not really knowledgeable; however, this varied with deployment. Participants were somewhat comfortable with cultural heritage, and those with more knowledge were more comfortable, as one would expect. While further studies would be required, it appears that the knowledge provided was enough to increase

efficacy in engaging cultural heritage for the vast majority of participants. Despite variations between participants' base knowledge, participants' average scores clearly increased in all three areas after reading the training manual.

Cultural property protection value was highest pre- and post-training, while knowledge regarding recovery of property was rated lowest pre- and post-training. Differences between those who had deployed were minimized post-training (no significant differences were found). This finding is important in that while not all participants began with the same levels of awareness or knowledge with cultural heritage, they finished relatively the same. This is encouraging for maintaining an equal playing field and equitable resources and capacities among service members as they engage in cultural heritage.

Future studies should include objective assessment of awareness and knowledge rather than, or in addition to, self rating. Additional questions should also assess training and experience with cultural heritage specifically. It is known, for example, that the Army has Fort Drum as a place to engage cultural heritage education and that certain career fields, such as law, have courses in cultural property; however, it is not known whether other branches have such resources. An additional measure would be a follow-up study to ensure retention of knowledge after training, as well as re-test reliability. Lastly, tracking of incidents and outcomes in the field may be the key to policy and leadership support and ownership. While these factors are known, objective measurement and illustration would be a significant next step.

With regard to the manual itself, revisions to create a slightly shorter interactive, dynamic, electronic version are recommended. Different educational levels or purposes could be embedded for different leadership levels within the military. The recommendation for collateral duty is also worth consideration. Just as participants receive an in-depth training that allows them

to help others vote, be fit, volunteer, keep track of hazardous substances in medical clinics, and more, commands or units that would benefit from cultural heritage training could employ this as a collateral duty. Training could occur at Fort Drum as well as online. This would enable a streamlined advocacy and reach-back capability that service members remarked they needed.

Conclusion

These studies sought to examine the following questions: Do service members have the necessary skills to protect cultural property as they deploy worldwide? Do service members see the impact of cultural property protection on matters that range from equal opportunity to national security? What is the impact of cultural property training? While the current studies leave room for further refinement and methodological improvement, they do lend data that is helpful to exploring these questions.

The vast majority of participants had no experience with cultural heritage training, and they had some awareness of cultural heritage value but little cultural heritage knowledge or efficacy. Participants varied in their understanding of the connection between cultural heritage and EO or national security as evidenced by specific questions and analysis of their comments. Several participants, for example, believed that cultural heritage did not apply to them, while after the training, several participants viewed destruction of property in new light. The impact of cultural property training was measurably significant, with the majority of participants improving on all measures. The biggest difference between the two manuals, as shown in the data, was in assessment: 100% of participants found the longer manual useful and would read it, while this was not the case with the shorter manual. Further studies would be required to determine whether this finding is a function of group difference or manual difference.

In conclusion, cultural heritage is an important process and outcome. Cultural heritage relates to issues faced in deployment as well as in times of peace, in land and on sea. The sheer volume of participants who have deployed but have not received cultural heritage information is alarming; however, the effectiveness of training is encouraging. Cultural heritage is moderately known in the field, has the ability to be successfully taught, and remains an important component of today's force. As Bokova (2013) notes, the importance of cultural heritage cannot be overstated; it is "a driver and enabler of sustainability … a source of meaning and belonging … a wellspring of creativity and innovation essential for all societies today."

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Gender	75% Male and 25% Female
Race	58% White, 33% Black, and 9% Other
Service	53% Army, 13% Navy, 13% Marines, 9% Air Force, and 12% Civilian
Rank	37% E-7–E-9, 37% O-4–O-6, 10% O-1–O-3, 10% GS-11–GS-14, and 6% Other
Occupation	35% HR, 17% Infantry, 17% Science,14% Legal, 10% Supply, and 7% Aviation
Deployed Status	63% Deployed and 37% Not deployed
Cultural Training	93% No cultural training and 7% Cultural training
Witnessed Destruction	8% Witnessed destruction (pre-), 92% No witness 17% Witnessed destruction (post-) , 83% No witness

Figure 1. Study One Demographics
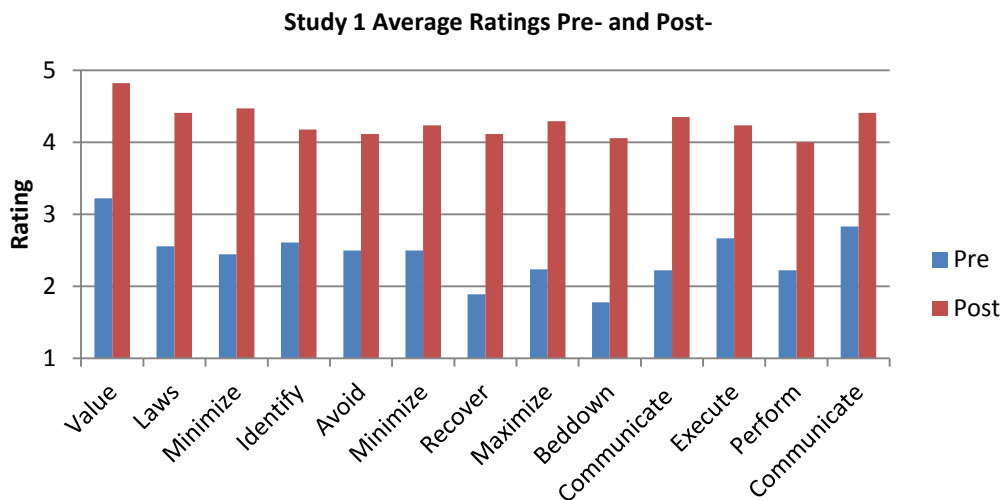
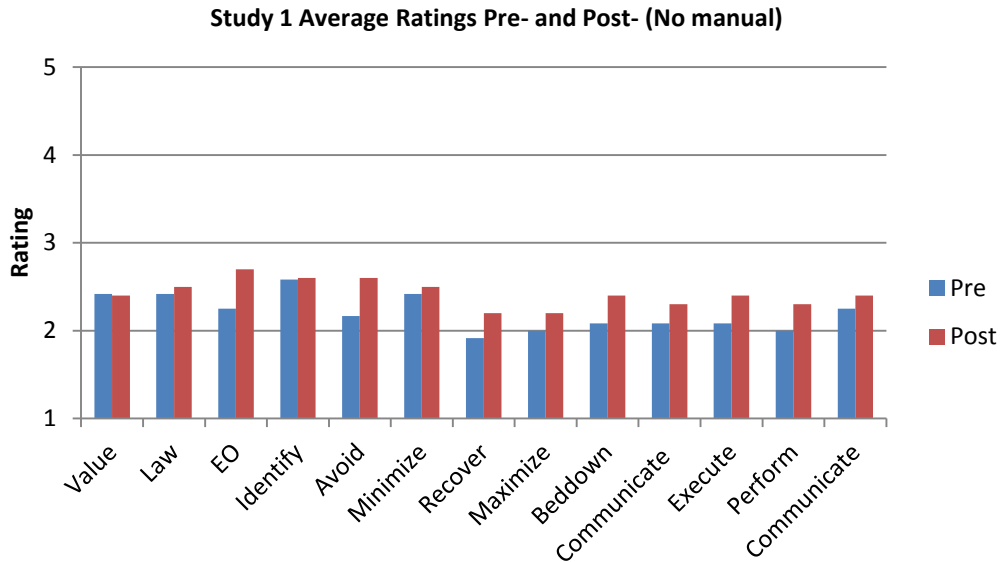*Figure 2.* Study 1 Average Ratings Pre- and Post-

Study 1 Average Ratings Pre- and Post- (No manual)

Figure 3. Study 1 Average Ratings Pre- and Post- (No manual)

| Gender	58% Male and 42% Female
Race	51% Black, 25% White, 10% Hispanic, 10% Other, and 4% Asian
Service	58% Army, 22% Air Force, 11% Navy, 3% Marines, 3% Coast Guard, and 3% National Guard
Rank	67% E-7–E-9, 17% E-4–E-6, 10% O-4–O-6, and 6% O-1–O-3
Occupation	42% HR, 14% Supply, 11% Other, 10% Infantry, 8% EO, 6% Medical, 3% Signal, 3% Aviation, and 3% Legal
Deployed Status	87% Deployed and 13% Not deployed
Cultural Training?	78% No cultural training and 22% Cultural training
Witness Destruction?	9% Witnessed destruction (pre-), 91% No witness 12% Witnessed destruction (post-) , 88% No witness

Figure 4. Study Two Demographics

Study 2 Average Ratings Pre- and Post-
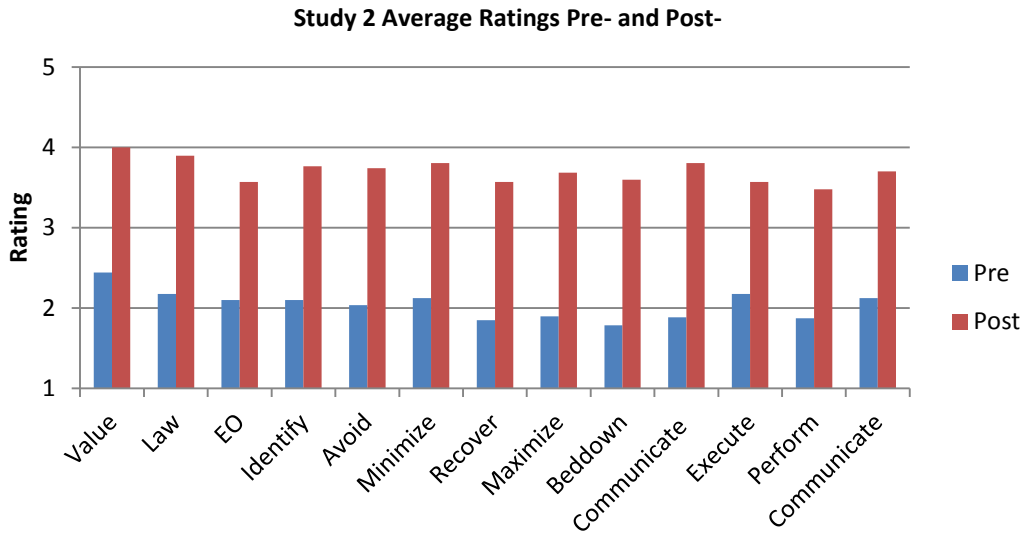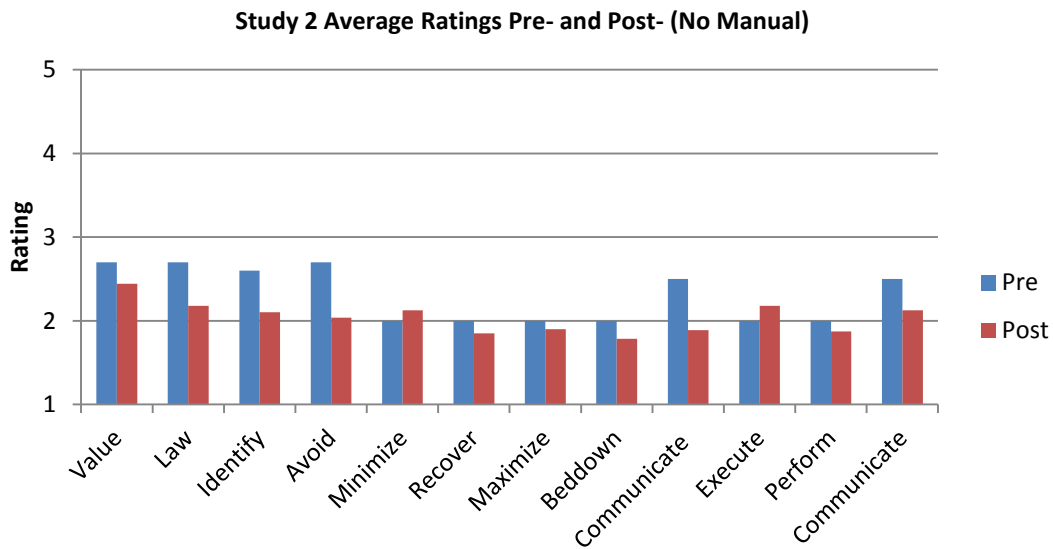

Figure 5. Study 2 Average Ratings Pre- and Post-

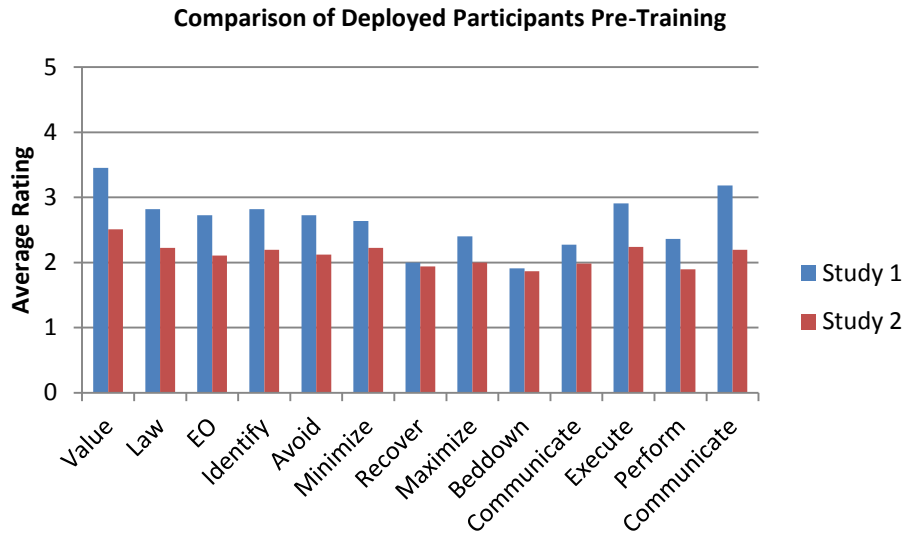**Study 2 Average Ratings Pre- and Post- (No Manual)**

Figure 6. Study 2 Average Ratings Pre- and Post- (No Manual)

Comparison of Deployed Participants Pre-Training

Figure 7. Average Ratings of Studies 1 and 2 Participants Pre-Manual

Study 1 Average Pre-Manual Ratings by Deployment Status
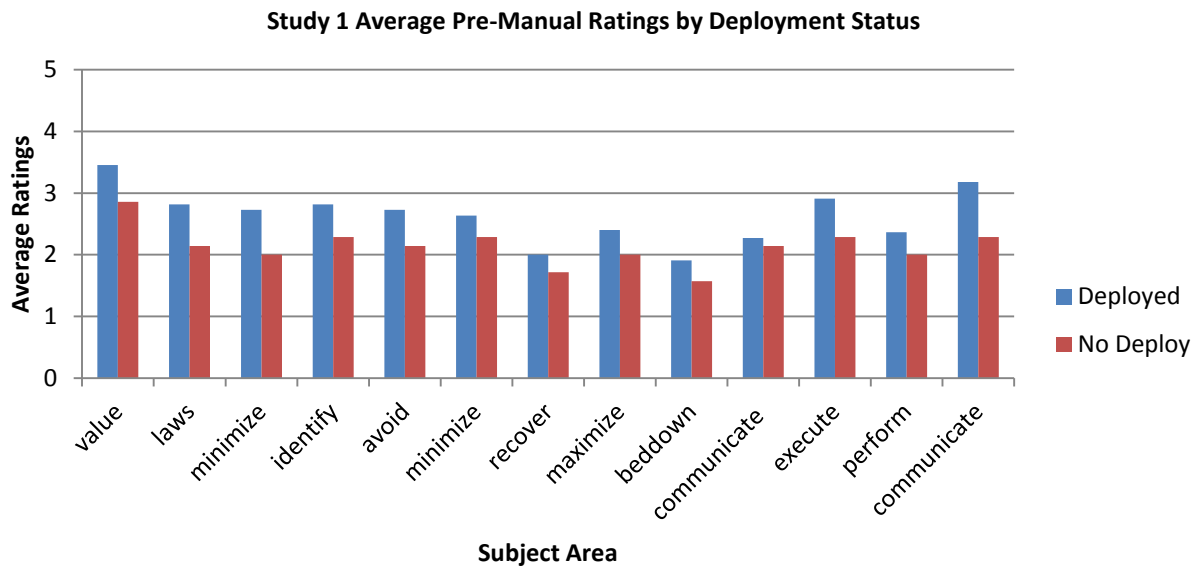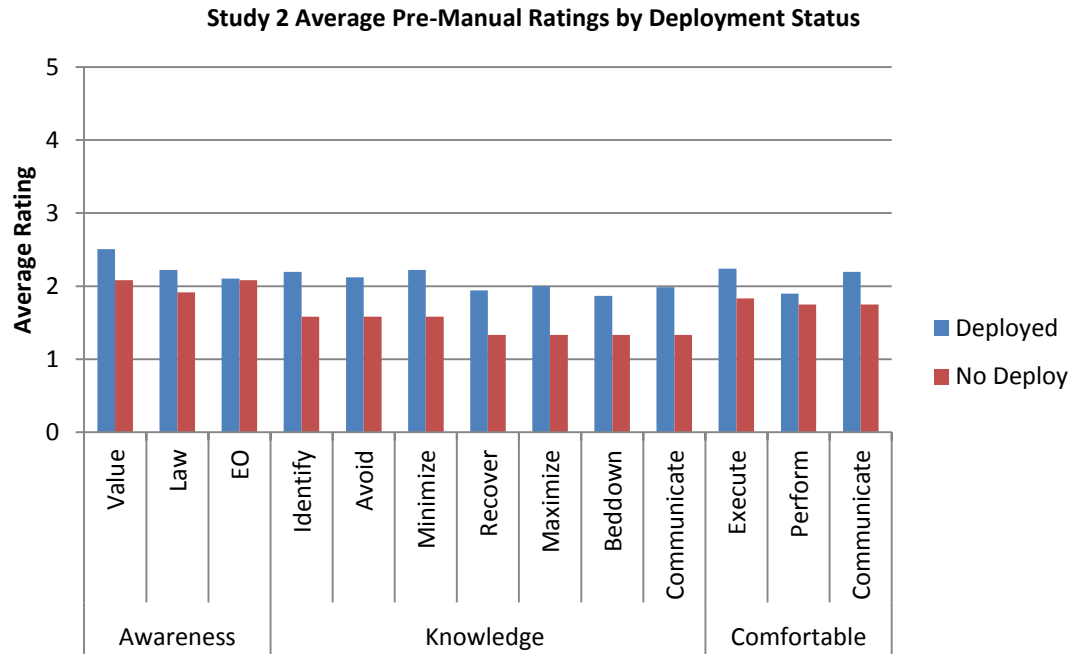

Figure 8. Study 1 Average Ratings Pre-Manual By Deployment Status

Figure 9. Study 2 Average Ratings Pre-Manual by Deployment Status